

Message Text

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67

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 IO-04 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /065 W
----- 123359

R 042248Z NOV 74

FM AMCONSUL BELIZE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3792

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR BH

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS IN BELIZE

MEXICO ALSO FOR LEGATT

REF: BELIZE 641 (NOTAL)

1. PARTY OF PREMIER GEROGUE PRICE (PUP) WHICH HAD WON SEVENTEEN OUT OF EIGHTEEN SEATS IN BELIZE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN 1969, WAS RETURNED TO POWER IN THE OCTOBER 30 GENERAL ELECTION BUT WITH ITS REPRESENTATION IN THE HOUSE REDUCED TO TWELVE SEATS.

2. OPPOSITION WHICH GOT ONLY ONE SEAT IN 1969 ELECTION, WILL HAVE SIX SEATS IN NEW HOUSE.

3. COMPOSITION OF NEW HOUSE WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

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A. MAJORITY - PEOPLES UNITED PARTY (PUP) - PREMIER PRICE;

FIVE INCUMBENT CABINET MEMBERS (ROGERS, COURTENAY, SILVESTRE, PERDOMO AND FRED HUNTER); THREE OTHER INCUMBENT HOUSE MEMBERS AND THREE NEW MEMBERS.

B. MINORITY - UNITED DEMOCRATIC PARTY (UDP) - FORMER OPPOSITION LEADER PHILIP GOLDSON AND FIVE NEW MEMBERS. (DEAN LINDO WILL BE OPPOSITION LEADER IN THE NEW HOUSE.)

4. A BAD DAY FOR EXTREMISTS. UNSUCCESSFUL PUP CANDIDATES INCLUDED THE TWO MOST CLEARLY IDENTIFIED WITH PARTY'S LEFT WING (SHOMAN AND MUSA). UDP LOSERS INCLUDED PARTY'S TWO ARCH CONSERVATIVES. EVAN HYDE, ONLY CANDIDATE FIELDDED BY UBAD, BELIZE'S BLACK POWER PARTY, DID NOT GET ENOUGH VOTES (I.E., TEN PERCENT) TO GET HIS ENTRY FEE REFUNDED. THIS PROBABLY MARKS THE END OF UBAD'S EFFORTS TO COMPETE IN THE LEGITIMATE POLITICAL ARENA.

5. APATHY. VOTER TURNOUT WAS LOW; THIS APPEARS TO HAVE HURT THE PUP MORE THAN IT DID UDP.

6. OTHER FACTORS. OUTCOME WAS TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT BASED ON PERSONALITIES. UDP WINNERS WERE ALL STRONG, RELATIVELY ATTRACTIVE CANDIDATES. DISCONTENT OVER RISING PRICES UNDOUBTEDLY HURT THE PUP. ALSO, UDP CHARGES OF CORRUPTION AND MINISTERIAL INCOMPETENCE PROBABLY SCORED WITH SOME VOTERS.

7. POST ELECTION POLITICS. NEW GOVERNMENT AND ITS OPPOSITION HAVE MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT THE WORKINGS OF A TWO-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY. HERETOFORE, PRICE AND HIS PARTY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO STEAMROLLER LEGISLATION OVER LONE OPPOSITION MEMBER GIVING ONLY LIP-SERVICE TO CONSIDERING OTHER THAN GOVERNMENT VIEWS. THIS WILL NO LONGER BE POSSIBLE.

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR TERRITORIAL DISPUTE WITH GUATEMALA. SINCE DISPUTE WAS NOT A MAJOR ISSUE IN CAMPAIGN, GOB UNLIKELY TO READ ELECTION RETURNS AS A GO-SLOW SIGNAL; HENCE, MOST LOCAL OBSERVERS EXPECT PRICE TO PROCEED MUCH AS BEFORE IN HIS EFFORTS TO LINE UP INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENCE. GAWF

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